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25X1 1. Training

The Hungarian merchant marine officers' course in Budapest has been extended by two years. The course now contains a large measure of Communist Party indoctrination and very little practical training on board ship. The number of pupils has dropped from 30 to 17.

2. Morale and Security

There is considerable discontent and distrust aboard the ships of the Hungarian Merchant Fleet. Political control on board has been tightened, though control of shore leave in foreign ports has ceased in an official form. Nevertheless, seamen's books are not handed to sailors on going ashore. A Hungarian sailor, who was hospitalized at Istanbul, was visited twice daily by members of the Hungarian Consulate.

3. Classification of Meszhart

The Hungarian State Shipping Line, Meszhart, has in the past been classified with Bureau Veritas (the French Register), but Meszhart vessels have now been transferred to the Soviet Register. The Soviet classification requirements are heavy, including DF, shortwave radio, fast-working windlasses, and special salvage equipment.

4. Commercial control of Meszhart

For all practical purposes the commercial operation of Meszhart has been transferred to the Department of Foreign Commerce in the Hungarian Ministry of Commerce. All disposition of cargoes must be made in consultation with the Ministry.

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5. Repairs to Meszhart vessels

During the winter 1951 - 1952, the Meszhart vessels, TISZA, SZEGED, BUDAPEST, and DEBRECEN, were kept in Budapest for repairs which were going ahead slowly. The first vessel to return to sea was the DEBRECEN which came down the Danube in March 1952. The BUDAPEST was equipped with new Skoda motors (the second set in three years) and established a record in early May by making the trip from Budapest to Istanbul in seven days. The TISZA and the SZEGED were not expected to be ready until mid-June 1952. The TISZA was having its hull reinforced and was to be equipped with new engines in order to make voyages to the Persian Gulf in the future.

6. Future plans for Meszhart

Meszhart is planning to build two vessels of 2,400 tons of the same type as the CHIATURY. Due, however, to the shortage of steel, it is not expected that the keels will be laid until the fall of 1952. It is intended that these ships will ply on the Mediterranean, going only as far as Braila up the Danube. At Braila they will transship their cargoes into river-barges. In winter, when the Danube is frozen, these ships will call at Trieste and cargoes will be sent on to Budapest by rail.

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